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STATINTL

The Washington Merry-Go-Round

No Refund for Dodd but a Free Ride

By Drew Pearson
and Jack Anderson

This column owes an apology to Sen. Tom Dodd (D-Conn.) regarding the recent account of his trip to Miami—with his two sons—in which it was stated that he double-billed the Senate Internal Security Committee and the Citizens Committee for a Free Cuba \$153.72 each for the trip.

Dodd did take his two sons, together with his assistant, David Martin, Martin's wife and two children, to Miami under interesting circumstances. But a refund was given to the Cuban committee. Here are further details, some of them complicated, but illustrating the manner in which one Senator maneuvered with the taxpayers' money.

The trip took place in 1965 during a Senate Internal Security Committee investigation friendly to Gen. Wessin y Wessin, the Dominican strongman who was bucking the State Department's attempt to set up a civilian government in the Dominican Republic. Dodd and Sen. Roman Hruska (R-Neb.), of this committee seemed intent on lining up against the State Department on the side of the military. For some reason best known to the Senators, their investigation was taking place in the swank Eden Roc Hotel, one of the most expensive in Miami, instead of the rent-

free Federal Building in Miami where hearings are traditionally held.

The invitation to Dodd, Mrs. Dodd, and assistant Martin came from Paul D. Bethel, secretary of the Citizens Committee for a Free Cuba, who now complains that Dodd was not invited by the Citizens Committee but by the Cuban Representation in Exile.

The Family Is Included

After the invitation was issued, Martin telephoned Bethel to ask if Tom Dodd Jr. couldn't come with the Dodds. The Cubans said fine and sent him an extra ticket. At this point Martin decided that since he and the Senator were going to the Wessin y Wessin hearing, he could charge his own ticket to the Senate Internal Security Committee and use the free ticket donated by the Cuban Committee to take his wife to Miami.

After inquiring around the airlines, Martin also found that the first-class ticket given him by the Cubans could be used under the family plan, tourist class, to take his two children as well as his wife. This was done.

At the last minute Mrs. Dodd decided not to go. So Dodd exchanged her ticket for one for Jeremy Dodd, his second son. Thus, thanks to the generosity of the Cubans, plus a smart exchange of airline tickets, Dodd, his two

sons, his assistant, David Martin, Martin's wife and two children all went to Miami and all stayed at the Eden Roc, where their expenses were paid by the Cubans.

While in Miami, Dodd, who is a member of the Senate Subcommittee on Immigration, received an invitation from President Johnson to go with him to New York to sign the immigration bill.

The ceremony in New York was to be on Sunday, Oct. 3, and Dodd's speech before the Cubans in Miami was to be on the preceding Saturday night. The Senator was invited to fly from Washington to New York on the Presidential plane, but he had to get to Washington by Sunday morning. The only plane he could take left Miami shortly after midnight, arriving in Washington about 4 a.m. This interfered with the Senator's sleep.

So he asked Michael O'Hare, his accountant, to call the Air Force to see if a special plane could fly him from Miami to Washington Sunday morning. The Air Force agreed.

Weekend Ruined

Dodd then came back with a second request that his two sons also be allowed to fly on the Air Force plane. The Air Force refused.

When this message was conveyed to Dodd, the Senator almost screamed. He protested

vociferously that this had ruined his entire weekend.

In the end the Senator took the Air Force plane alone from Miami to Washington, joined the Presidential plane and flew on to New York.

After he got back, Dodd found himself with one unused round-trip ticket between Washington and Miami which had been supplied him by the Cubans. This was because he had gone to Miami at the expense of the Internal Security Committee and returned at the expense of the Air Force. So Dodd instructed his accountant, O'Hare, to get a refund on the unused round-trip ticket.

Since this ticket had been issued by a Cuban travel agency in Miami, it was impossible for O'Hare to get a refund direct from the airline. He had to go to the Cuban travel agency. When he did so, the agency wrote back asking whether the Senator from Connecticut would like to have the money returned to the Cuban friend who had paid for it in the first place.

Obviously it was embarrassing for Dodd to say no. O'Hare wrote back that this was agreeable.

Thus this column was in error in reporting that Dodd collected twice on his round-trip ticket between Washington and Miami. Our apologies.

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